

Remarks:

Figure 3 is revised to include instrumented pins as claimed in 31 and a control station as claim in claim 32. As claims 31-32 and the specification at page 9, lines 7-12 clearly disclose these features, the revisions to Figure 3 simply conform the drawings to the written specification and are permissible under MPEP § 2163.06. No new matter is added. Further, the instrumented pins and control station disclosed in the written specification are conventional features known to one of ordinary skill in the art. Detailed illustration of the instrumented pins and control station is not essential for a proper understanding of the invention. Therefore, in accordance with 37 CFR § 1.83, these features are illustrated as a labeled representations.

The specification is amended to conform with the Amendment to Figure 3, specifically to indicate that the control station is illustrated therein. The amendment is strictly formal in nature, and no new matter is introduced.

Claims 1 and 21 are amended to correct informalities noted by the examiner in the office action.

The examiner has rejected claims 1-4, 6-15, 17-22, 24, 25, 28-30 and 34-38 as being anticipated by Borseth (U.S. 6,106,198). The examiner asserts that the Borseth TLP does not comprise any temporary stability or buoyancy modules coupled thereto. The applicant respectfully disagrees and requests the examiner to reconsider her opinion.

The Description of the Prior Art section of the specification in the applicant's patent application clearly describes temporary stability or buoyancy modules: The stability of a TLP may be inadequate during installation. U.S. Patent Application No. 10/789,659 p. 1 ll. 17-18. There are a number of ways to increase the stability of a TLP, such as using a wider column. *Id.* at p. 2 ll. 3-5. The prior art often relies on using costly, specialized installation equipment such as temporary buoyancy modules to provide stability during installation. *Id.*

Amendments to the Drawings:

The enclosed drawing sheet includes changes to Figure 3. This sheet, which includes only Figure 3, replaces the original sheet including only Figure 3.

Enclosure: One Replacement Sheet

at p. 2 ll. 8-11. The ordinary meaning of the term “temporary” is existing or continuing for a limited time, Merriam-Webster Inc., Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged (2002), or lasting, used or enjoyed for a limited time. Houghton Mifflin Company, American Heritage Dictionary (2d coll. ed. 1985). Therefore, it is understood by one of ordinary skill in the art that a temporary stability module means a system or an apparatus which is used to provide stability to the vessel only during installation and which, after installation, is not used to provide stability to the vessel, but rather is moved, removed or otherwise disabled to minimize its continued effect on the vessel. The term temporary is used not to indicate that the temporary stability module must be completely removed from the vessel after installation, but rather that its function of providing stability to the vessel is used or enjoyed for a limited time, specifically during installation of the vessel to the mooring tendons. A float which is used only during installation to increase vessel stability by increasing the width of a column and which is then moved or removed after installation clearly falls as a temporary stability module as understood by one of ordinary skill in the art.

Likewise, Borseth teaches using a float 15 as a temporary stability module. “In FIG. 10a, configuration of the float 15 is such that it is affixed towards the upper end of main buoyancy structure 13. In this configuration, the float 15 provides stability to the tension leg platform 9 because of the increased water displacement at the surface of the water. Thus, in this configuration, the tension-leg platform 9 has increased stability which is important during the attachment of the tendons 27 to the sea floor 23 and to the tension-leg platform 9. However, as soon as the tendons 27 are securely in place, the water displacement at the surface is no longer needed. In fact, once the tension-leg platform 9 is secured to the sea floor, increased surface area of the tension leg platform 9 at the surface of the water 11 is detrimental. As the waves act on the large surface area of the float 15 (see FIG. 1a(1) and

1a(2)), they induce resonance in the tension-leg platform 9 until the amplitude of the resonance is such that the tendons 27 begin to break. Therefore, as shown in FIG. 10b, once the tendon leg platform 9 has secured to the sea floor, the float 15 is moved by a mover so that it is lowered until it abuts against the pontoons 14. The mover of the float 15 may comprise ballast, a pulley cable system, a hydraulic system, or any other system known.” (Emphasis added.) U.S. Patent No. 6,106,198 col. 6 l. 52 – col. 7 l. 7. Borseth teaches using costly specialized installation equipment of a float and a mover (pulley cable system, hydraulic system, etc.) to temporarily provide stability only during vessel installation and to minimize the effects of the specialized installation equipment on the vessel thereafter. Clearly, Borseth teaches using a temporary stability module.

Claims 1-4, 6-15, 17-22, 24, 25, 28-30 and 34-38 all contain the limitation that the vessel has no temporary stability or buoyancy modules coupled thereto. These claims are not anticipated by Borseth, because Borseth teaches coupling a temporary stability module to the vessel. Reconsideration of these claims in light of the arguments herein is respectfully requested.

The examiner also rejected claims 42-44 as anticipated by Borseth, stating that Borseth discloses the steps of anchoring the tendons 19 to the sea floor. The applicant agrees that Borseth teaches anchoring tendons 19 to the sea floor. Specifically, Borseth that a “tendon 19 and a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) are attached 402 to an anchor 20. The [suction] anchor 20 is lowered from the support vessel 18 by the tendon 19.” (Emphasis added.) *Id.* at col. 4 ll. 39-42. An anchor is known to one of ordinary skill in the art as a device, usually a heavy object attached to a ship, boat or other vessel by a cable or chain used to keep the vessel in place by securement of the anchor to the seafloor. Houghton Mifflin Company, American Heritage Dictionary (2d coll. ed. 1985), Merriam-Webster Inc., Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged (2002).

This definition is clearly supported by the Borseth specification which describes how the suction anchor of Figure 7 is used to hold the TLP in place. U.S. 6,106,198 at col. 5 l. 17 – col. 6 l. 4. Borseth clearly teaches using a tendon 19 to lower an anchor (device which holds the vessel in place) to the seafloor. *Id.* at col. 4 ll. 39-42.


However, claim 42 requires positioning a tendon above a foundation anchored in the seabed, lowering a lower end of the tendon into the anchored foundation, and securing the lower end of the tendon into the anchored foundation. U.S. 10/789,659 at p. 24 ll. 1-3. The applicant's specification clearly describes and illustrates in Figures 12-13 that the foundation 50 functions as an anchor. The foundation 50 is anchored to the seabed before it is coupled to the tendon 12. The tendon 12 does not lower the foundation (anchor) to the seafloor as is taught by Borseth. Borseth does not disclose lowering a tendon into a foundation which is already anchored to the seabed. Therefore, applicant submits that claims 42-44 are not anticipated by Borseth, and applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of these claims.

The examiner rejected claims 16, 23, 26, 31-33, and 39-41 as unpatentable over Borseth in view of Wetmore (U.S. 4,604,001), Vincken et al. (U.S. 3,681,928), and Wybro (U.S. 5,551,802). In view of the arguments herein that Borseth does not disclose a vessel without a temporary stability or buoyancy module, applicant believes that these rejections are improper. Reconsideration of claims 16, 23, 26, 31-33, and 39-41 is respectfully requested.

In summary, claims 1-44 are pending in the application. Applicant believes the application is in condition for allowance. Allowance of claims 1-44 and passage to issue is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure: Replacement Drawing Sheet containing Figure 3.